

Thank you for your email concerning the Brickyard Road tract.

I have an ongoing concern about the dearth of rectangular sports fields in the Down County, especially given our growing youth population and their recreational needs in Bethesda and Potomac.

The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission in its 2005 PROS plan referenced the need for more multipurpose rectangular fields, especially in the Down County. Specifically, it calls for an additional 88 multi-purpose rectangular fields in the County by 2020. You'll find it on page five in the following link:  
[http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/ParkPlanning/Projects/LPPRP/LPPRP\\_2005/LPPRP\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/ParkPlanning/Projects/LPPRP/LPPRP_2005/LPPRP_Executive_Summary.pdf)

In addition, the Potomac Master Plan, approved by the County Council in 2002, following extensive hearings and work sessions, explicitly recognizes that future school sites offer potential for fulfilling some of the recreation needs of the Potomac Subregion and that *all* school sites not otherwise recommended in the Plan for environmental conservation should be considered for other public uses.

The Master Plan specifically points to the Brickyard site as suitable for ball fields. (Potomac Subregion Master Plan, p.135) With more than 93,000 acres of the County – amounting to one-third of its land mass -- devoted to agricultural reserve and less than 4% of the County otherwise undeveloped, we must look to sites identified in our master plans for suitable uses to meet the greater public needs. And, at a time when County fiscal resources are seriously challenged, developing public-private partnerships is one way to help us meet the broader public needs.

The County is currently seeking input from the community on implementation prior to issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP). The responses to that RFP will determine whether there is a suitable partner to work with the County in a public-private partnership on the project.

I am committed to helping solve the unmet recreation need for fields, and to ensuring that this is done in accordance with the vision of the Master Plan, while also addressing concerns within the community. Community feedback will be helpful in that regard. Also, the solicitation for someone to develop and operate the fields will specifically exclude the use of artificial turf as an option, and will not permit the installation of lights.

I have visited the private commercial farm currently on the property, which now, by lease, is the County's. Because I recognize that the solicitation and field development approval process could take at least a year, we have already signed an agreement with the private farmer to allow him to remain on the land through the upcoming growing season. While I recognize that some may prefer this private use of public land; this public asset can better serve a broader public interest and clear unmet need in the county. We will also evaluate the possibility of dual use for both recreation and farming on the current site.

As mentioned above, the County has devoted extensive areas to agricultural production with one-third of the County's land area being part of the County's Agricultural Reserve. I fully support the protection of our Agricultural Reserve, but the Brickyard school site is not part of the Agricultural Reserve and, per the governing Master Plan, is suitable for a broader public use.

With programs being cut for youth and others, I strongly believe that we must step forward in creative ways to advance positive youth development through the provision of sports opportunities. A public-private partnership for the development and operation of ball fields on a publicly owned site will help to meet a need for county youth at minimal expense at a location already identified as suitable for such use.

I appreciate your taking the time to share your views.

Sincerely,

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive